



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Potterspury Lodge School

**Potterspury Lodge
Towcester
Northants
NN12 7LL**

Lead Inspector
Joanne Vyas

Announced Inspection
11th October 2005 2:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

Reader Information	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	Potterspurry Lodge School
Address	Potterspurry Lodge Towcester Northants NN12 7LL
Telephone number	01908 542912
Fax number	01908 543399
Email address	mail@potterspurrylodge.co.uk
Provider Web address	www.potterspurrylodge.co.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	The Trustees of Potterspurry Lodge School
Name of Head	Mr J W D Brown
Name of Head of Care	Mr C Laidler
Age range of residential pupils	8-16 years
Date of last welfare inspection	11 th , 12 th , & 13 th October 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Potterspurty Lodge offers education with boarding for up to 36 boys of the age range 8 years to 16 years. The school also provides places for day pupils, some of whom take part in evening activities. Founded originally as a Steiner school, the school retains few of the Steiner principles, but the community ethos remains strong.

Many of the staff live on site, including most care staff and the Head of Care Mr Laidler. The main house is a large grade 2 listed building and accommodates some of the school classrooms, some boarding areas, the main office and medical room. Further boarding accommodation and school facilities are provided in various buildings adjacent to the main house.

The school is set in several acres of land providing a very tranquil and spacious setting with some beautiful features and scenery. A stream running into a small lake filled with various fish, where boys can fish for pleasure, marks the school boundary to one side. Another boundary is marked by a large vegetable garden, orchard and oakery, though these areas are out of bounds to the children unless accompanied by an adult. A large field provides a football pitch, running track and large play area including climbing frames and swings. There is a skate park, tennis and basketball courts. Indoor facilities include a large sports hall, pottery and music room, a chapel and other educational facilities that can be used for extra-curricula activities.

The boarding accommodation consists of 6 self contained units providing accommodation for groups of up to 6 boys. This accommodation is homely and comfortable. Boarding is available from Sunday evening to Friday, during term time only.

SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The focus of the inspections undertaken by the CSCI is upon outcomes for young people and their views of the service provided. The primary method of Inspection used was 'case tracking' which involved selecting students who stay in residence and tracking the care they received through discussion with students, looking at their records and discussion with care staff.

This announced inspection took place between 2pm and 7:30pm on the first day of inspection, 8am and 4pm on the second day and 10am and 4:30pm on the third day and was carried out as part of the annual plan of inspection. Planning for this inspection included reviewing the previous inspection report, school policies and procedures, the Heads self-assessment document and the pre-inspection document. Also a pre-inspection meeting was held with the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and the Principal. At the time of writing this report, the inspector received one completed questionnaire from care staff and ten from parents. Students did not complete questionnaires as the school felt inspectors would get a more accurate picture of boarding by talking to the students.

What the school does well:

Generally, there are excellent outcomes for students who board at this school. A caring, professional, well-trained and supported care staff support students. Students enjoy boarding and find it a valuable part of their education. There are excellent links between education and boarding.

Boarding offers an excellent opportunity to access a valuable resource as part of a well planned and evaluated extended curriculum, gaining essential life skills as part of their personal, social and health education but also enabling students to access learning during the school day by offering structure, routine and consistency. The school is commended for the variety of activities provided and is highly commended for the encouragement and support it gives to students with regard to following a healthy lifestyle and gaining independence. Parents said the best things about the school are its safe environment; plenty of staff who are warm and friendly and the fresh food. Students said they enjoy the meals and activities provided at the school.

Health and safety checks and risk assessments are comprehensive and robust.

What has improved since the last inspection?

No recommendations were made at the previous inspection but the school strives to make improvements and comply with all the relevant legislation.

What they could do better:

The inspectors found a number of issues with regard to the safe handling of medication, which will be inspected further by a Pharmacist Inspector. The inspectors felt these issues could potentially put students at risk.

The inspectors found evidence of poor recording of incidents, specifically when a physical intervention was used and of accidents to students. The inspectors also felt that the physical intervention training should be reviewed.

Currently all staff have a Criminal Records Bureau check completed but this is not repeated to ensure clearance continues.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Staff actively promote the health of the students at this school although issues around the storage and administration of medication may put students at risk.

EVIDENCE:

- Meals are cooked from fresh ingredients and are varied. The fruit and vegetables are grown on-site and are organic. The cook explained that she also only buys locally produced organic beef and other meats. The cook and other staff also explained that they avoid food additives. Students all said they enjoyed the food and that they had plenty to eat. One student, supported by a member of staff, explained that he only ate sausages and drank water before he came to the school. The inspector observed him eating gammon steak, chips (which are only offered once a fortnight) and minted peas followed by treacle tart and custard. Points are awarded to students dependent upon how many portions of fruit and vegetables they eat each day to encourage them to eat healthily. A parent stated via a questionnaire that one of the best things about the school was the fresh food served.
- Students are encouraged to follow outdoor pursuits and sports rather than watch the television in the evenings. These creative activities appeared very popular amongst students.
- The safe handling of medication was not fully assessed as a number of issues were found with the storage and administration of medication. Therefore a pharmacist inspector will complete a full inspection of the safe handling of medication at this school and produce a separate report.
- Accidents are only recorded if treatment is received.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Generally, staff are competent and have the skills necessary to ensure students are kept safe while residing at the school. A number of areas have been highlighted with regard to physical interventions that could be improved.

EVIDENCE:

- Students said that they know who to complain to if they are upset and felt they are listened to.
- All staff receive child protection training on an annual basis and were competent in their knowledge.
- There are pro-active measures in place to counter bullying and bullying is dealt with immediately and recorded in the incident/sanction book.

- Sanctions are recorded in a bound and numbered book and most students felt these are fairly applied. A parent stated via a questionnaire, "Punishments are usually linked with the crime."
- All staff have received physical intervention training. The training staff receive shows excellent methods of positive handling, keeping students and staff safe and de-escalation techniques. However, it only trains staff in one hold, which is a prone restraint. Evidence was found that this hold is not used but another hold was used, which staff haven't been trained to use but was possibly more appropriate in this case. All physical interventions are recorded in the incident book, which is bound and numbered. Recording is ambiguous. The format does offer space for students to make comments about the incident but these are rarely completed. An incident was also found in the care notes for one boy that had not been recorded in the incident book.
- All staff said that the school's emphasis is on positive reinforcement using praise, encouragement and incentive schemes such as "the Privilege Scheme". This was also the observation of the inspectors.
- Recruitment checks are comprehensive and robust. Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed for all staff but not repeated after a period of time to ensure staff continue to have a clear CRB.
- Health and safety checks are carried out appropriately. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for individual students, trips out and the environment including fire. A window looking over to a flat roof with a gap between the roof and the window should be fitted with a window restrictor.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Staff provide students with the appropriate level of support. Education is a valued and intrinsic part of the agenda in boarding.

EVIDENCE:

- Parents/carers are invited to the Annual Review of the Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) at the school. The care staff are also in regular contact with parents/carers via the phone or letters.
- Care staff handover to teaching staff each morning and evening to ensure consistency.
- A parent stated via a questionnaire, "Excellent holistic approach to students."
- Care staff have access to the Individual Education and Care Plans for all students in boarding as well as the SEN. Care staff demonstrated a good awareness of educational plans of all students during this inspection and work closely with the teaching staff.
- Activities in boarding are planned for in and around the local community as well as within the school and clubs in the evening are run by teachers. The Head of Care explained that students can also join local clubs such as Boys Brigade, the brass band and drama group.
- Individual support is identified and given as appropriate to the needs of the student.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

The Statement of Special Educational Need, Individual Education and Care Plans and Placement Plans enable staff to provide a needs led service with the student at its centre.

EVIDENCE:

- House parents complete good, user friendly Placement Plans for each student in boarding. Care notes are in-depth and generally well written. There was one example where the inspectors struggled to read the notes made.
- Group meetings are held once a week and recorded. Students discuss the Privilege Reward Scheme and general maintenance issues. A house parent said that this week the students were keen to have the new Harry Potter film as part of the "Privilege Scheme".
- A parent stated via a questionnaire, "The staff always put the pupils' needs first." This was also the observations of the inspectors.
- Admissions are planned and are sensitive to the needs of the student and how the school can meet his needs.

- Preparation for leaving the school is addressed through the Annual Review process.
- Staff relationships with students were observed to be positive, caring and professional. A parent stated via a questionnaire, "Staff are warm and friendly."

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Students are supported and offered choices throughout, preparing them for independent living. This school is generally well maintained, furnished and decorated.

EVIDENCE:

- Leaving the school is planned through transitional reviews. Care staff take an active role in equipping students with life skills including supporting students in a “Life Skills flat”; shopping; using public transport and social and domestic skills. A parent stated via a questionnaire, “They encourage the boys to develop their independence.”
- Students who board bring clothing to change into in the evenings and appropriate laundering facilities are available.
- The school is clean, well maintained and decorated and furnished to a good standard. Bedrooms are highly personalised.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

The care staff benefit from good management, leadership and direction, which ensures students receive consistent, quality care providing them with the skills they require for an independent life.

EVIDENCE:

- The school's prospectus is a comprehensive document.
- Reviews of the Statement of Special Educational Need take place annually.
- Records for students are generally comprehensive and well organised.
- The Head of Care/ Deputy Principal has 19 years experience working with children, 5 of which are as Head of Care and a Bachelor of Social Science Degree. Most care staff have been trained to the National Vocational Qualification level three standard and have received training in a number of relevant subjects including child protection, physical

intervention and children with Asperger's Syndrome and Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

- Staff feel well supported. Care staff meet three times a week. There is a full staff meeting at the beginning of each half term. A programme of supervision has just been implemented for all care staff.
- There are usually two staff per hostel. All staff are in communication with each other via portable radios.
- The Principal conducts detailed formal inspections of each of the hostels and writes a report for the trustees and action plans for the House Parents. The management team ensure that they spend time in the hostels on a weekly basis. this ensures consistent, quality care.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	1
15	4

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
4	3
5	3
6	3
7	3
8	3
10	2
26	2
27	2

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4
13	4
22	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	3
9	3
11	3
17	3
20	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	4
23	3
24	3
25	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
18	3
19	3
28	3
29	3
30	3
31	3
32	4
33	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action
1	RS10	The Principal is recommended to review the training staff receive for physical intervention.	30/01/06
2	RS14RS10	The Principal is recommended to review the school's recording system for incidents and accidents.	30/01/06
3	RS26	The Principal is recommended to fix a window restrictor to a window in Top Pirling.	30/12/05
4	RS27	The Principal is recommended to review the school's protocol for the Criminal Records Bureau and seek advice from them regarding the frequency of CRB clearance checks for staff.	30/01/06

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